

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5239

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0641

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: WA, UK, SF, PINT

SUBJ: BRITISH MINISTER'S IMPRESSIONS OF NAMIBIA SITUATION

1. DAVID SUMMERHAYES, MINISTER AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY, VISITED NAMIBIA FROM MAY 9 TO 16 AND HAS SUPPLIED US WITH A COPY OF HIS CLASSIFIED TRIP REPORT (TRANSMITTED BY AIRGRAM). HE FEELS THAT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE IS A NECESSARY AND WORTHWHILE PROCESS BUT A VARIETY OF FACTORS ARE LIEKELY TO MAKE RESULTS TARDIER THEN MANY WOULD WISH. FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES REPORT.

2. SUMMERHAYES FEELS CONFERENCES, DESPITE SWAPO ABSENCE, HAS BROUGHT TOGETHER A NUMBER OF RESPONSIBLE POLITICIANS AND LEADERS WHO MAY EVENTUALLY BE ABLE TO BRING FORTH A WORTHWHILE CONSENSUS. SWAPO MAY REPRESENT AS MUCH AS 50 PERCENT OF THE OVAMBOS BUT PROBABLY ONLY 15 TO 20 PERCENT OF OTHERS, AND IS GENERALLY THOUGHT OF AS AN OVAMBO POLITICAL ELEMENT RATHER THAN THE KIND OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATION ITS LEADERS CLAIM
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IT TO BE. SUMMERHAYES IS OF THE OPINION THAT SWAPO IS

AND MUST BE TREATED AS ONE ORGANIZATION THOUGH APPEARANCES SUGGEST SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTIONS. HE THINKS A WAY MAY BE FOUND DURING THE NEXT TWO MONTHS TO ASSOCIATE SWAPO IN SOME WAY WITH THE CURRENT TALKS.

3. THE AUTHORITY OF DIRK MUDGE, REPRESENTING THE MORE LIBERAL ELEMENTS OF THE NATIONAL PARTY, HAS BEEN SERIOUSLY CHALLENGED BY CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS LED BY A.H. DU PLESSIS, LATELY RETURNED TO ASSERT LEADERSHIP IN THE PARTY. THE COOPERATION PREVIOUSLY EXISTING BETWEEN MUDGE AND SOME OF THE KEY NON-WHITE PARTICIPANTS COULD SUFFER, ACCORDING TO SUMMERHAYES, IF MUDGE LOSES THE SUPPORT OF HIS PARTY. MUDGE HAS THOUGHT OF FORMING AN INDEPENDENT PARTY BUT REJECTED THE IDEA. ANOTHER AREA OF POTENTIAL DIFFICULTY MAY LIE IN THE RESPONSE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE CONFERENCE IN THE FIELDS OF SOCIAL POLICY, EDUCATION, HOUSING AND REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATION. IF SAG, WHICH CONTINUES TO ADMINISTER AREA AS BEFORE, SHOULD TAKE A HARD NEGATIVE LINE, PARTICIPANTS MIGHT WITHDRAW FROM CONFERENCE CONVINCED THAT IT WAS POINTLESS.

4. DRAFT CONSTITUTION DISTRIBUTED BY HERERO CHIEF KAPUUNO IS STILL ONLY CONCRETE PROPOSAL BEFORE CONSTITUTIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE. OVAMBOS MAY BE CONSIDERING SUBMISSION OF THEIR OWN, BUT NEED EXPERT ADVICE. THUS CONSTITUTIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE WILL NOT HAVE ANYTHING SUBSTANTIAL FOR THE PLENARY TO DISCUSS ON JUNE 2, AND PROCESS OF FORMULATING AGREED CONSTITUTIONAL IDEAS MAY TAKE MUCH MORE TIME.

5. COMMENT: SUMMERHAYES, WHO IS A CAREFUL OBSERVER, WAS DISAPPOINTED AT THE OBVIOUS LACK OF FORWARD MOVEMENT AMONG CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS AND BY THE WAY IN WHICH THE CONSERVATIVE NATIONAL PARTY ESTABLISHMENT HAS TENDED TO PUT A DAMPER ON THE MORE PROGRESSIVE EFFORTS OF DIRK MUDGE, WITH WHOM SUMMERHAYES STAYED DURING HIS VISIT. FEW OF THE NATIONAL PARTY PEOPLE IN THE TERRITORY SHARE THE SENSE OF URGENCY WITH WHICH NAMIBIA IS VIEWED BY OUTSIDERS.

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SUMMERHAYES' REPORT WILL PROVIDE VALUABLE DETAIL FOR DEPT OFFICERS INTERESTED IN THE NAMIBIA QUESTION.

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